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Message Text

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43
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
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R 041510Z DEC 74
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 615
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T CAIRO 9843

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR EG US SA
SUBJECT: KAMAL ADHAM'S COMMENTS RE ME SITUATION

SUMMARY. MY CONVERSATION DEC 4 WITH KAMAL ADHAM, SAUDI KING'S SPECIAL ADVISOR, REVEALED HIS DEEPENING CONCERN OVER LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD ME SOLUTION, BASED NOT ONLY ON INTRANSIGENT ISRAELI ATTITUDE TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS WITH PLO, BUT ALSO ON CURRENT DISARRAY IN PALESTINIAN CAMP. HE FORESAW UNDESIRABLE PRESSURES BUILDING UP AS RESULT OF UPCOMING BREZHNEV VISIT AND URGED THAT US PUSH FOR EARLY PROGRESS ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI AND GOLAN, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT WEST BANK WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN ON BACK BURNER FOR A TIME. END SUMMARY.

1. KAMAL ADHAM ARRIVED IN CAIRO YESTERDAY ENROUTE TO SAUDI ARABIA FROM EUROPE. THROUGH SAUDI AMBASSADOR, HE ASKED ME TO COME BY TODAY FOR A CHAT. FOLLOWING DISTILLS ADHAM'S OBSERVATIONS DURING ONE-HOUR LONG TALK.

2. ADHAM WAS GLOOMY RE CURRENT IMPASSE IN ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION. AS AGAIN ATTESTED BY RABIN AND ALLON STATEMENTS OF PAST FEW DAYS, ISRAEL REMAINS ADAMANT IN ITS REFUSAL TO DEAL WITH PLO. INSTEAD, RABIN HAD PUBLICLY STATED GOE WILL WAIT ONE OR TWO YEARS, IF NECESSARY, UNTIL PALESTINIANS REALIZE THAT ONLY HUSSEIN CAN GET SOMETHING TANGIBLE FOR THEM. HAD ISRAELIS MADE SUCH PUBLIC STATEMENT PRIOR TO RABAT, IT WOULD

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HAVE HELPED HUSSEIN AT CONFERENCE. NOW IT MERELY CREATES

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FURTHER DIVISIONS IN ARAB RANKS. ISRAELIS APPEAR TO THINK TIME IS
ON THEIR SIDE. ADHAM EXPRESSED PERSONAL SKEPTICISM THAT
SITUATION WILL EVOLVE THE WAY RABIN BELIEVES. ON CONTRARY,
THERE IS GREATER POSSIBILITY THAT CONTINUED INACTION
ON WEST BANK WILL LEAD TO HEIGHTENED TERRORISM.

3. I POINTED OUT THAT NEITHER ARAFAT'S SPEECH NOR RECENT
PALESTINIAN RESOLUTION HAD HELPED THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. NEITHER
HAD SPECIFICALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST. IN SUCH
CIRCUMSTANCES, HOW COULD ISRAELIS BE EXPECTED TO BE WILLING TO
DEAL WITH PLO. ADHAM ACKNOWLEDGED THESE OMISSIONS, BUT
CONTENDED THAT SAUDIS KNOW FROM ARAFAT THAT THE LATTER IS
PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL. HE REPEATEDLY
HINTED THAT USG SHOULD URGE GOI TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING. I
REMINDED HIM OF PRESIDENT FOR'S STATEMENT THAT USG CANNOT
FORCE ISRAEL TO NEGOTIATE WITH PLO. MY PERSONAL ADVICE WAS THAT
SAUDIS WORK ON ARAFAT TO ADOPT PUBLIC POSTURE AND POLICIES THAT
AT THE VERY MINIMUM RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST.

4. ADHAM OPINED RANKS OF PALESTINIANS ARE CURRENTLY
IN SERIOUS DISARRAY AS DISPARAT PLO GROUPS ATTEMPT TO FORM
GOVERNMENT IN EXILE. HE BLIEVES VARIOUS "INDEPENDENT" WEST
BANKERS WILL CONSTITUTE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS IN ANY SUCH GOVERNMENT
IN EXILE WITH ARAFAT PERHAPS RELEGATED TO A LESSER ROLE. IN ADHAM'S
VIEW, THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WILL TELL WHETHER ARAFAT IS ABLE TO
MAINTAIN PLO LEADERSHIP. ARAFAT'S FAILURE PUBLICLY TO ACCEPT
THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL, HE CONTENDED, IS DICTATED BY THE CURRENT
INTERNECINE PALESTINIAN SQUABBLE. ADHAM THOUGHT WEST BANK
WITHDRAWAL WILL HAVE TO BE PUT ON A BACK BURNER UNTIL SUCH TIME
AS PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP "MATURES" A BIT MORE.

5. ADHAM MADE STRONG PITCH FOR SOME EARLY PROGRESS ON
ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN SINAI AND GOLAN. SAUDIS HAVE BEEN
SUPPORT SADAT, BUT ARE ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THE ARAB AND
DOMESTIC PRESSURES WHICH CONTINUED LACK OF MOVEMENT POSE.
UNLESS SOME EARLY MOVEMENT TAKES PLACE, SITUATION COULD REACH
A HEAD WHEN BREZHNEV ARRIVES. ADHAM EXPECTS THAT BREZHNEV
VISIT WILL MAKE A BIG SPLASH AND THAT SOV LEADER WILL COME
LADEN WITH GIFTS. SOVIETS HAVE DISCARDED "IDEOLOGICAL"
APPROACH AS INEFFECTIVE AND ARE NOW ADOPTING
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SHREWD POLITICAL TACTICS. IN ABSENCE SOME PROGRESS, IT WILL BE
DIFFICULT FOR SADAT TO RESIST PRESSURES TO ACCEDE TO BREZHNEV
DESIRES.

6. ADHAM ASKED ABOUT CURRENT STATE OF US-EGYPTIAN
RELATIONS. HE NOTED EGYPTIAN PRESS AND OTHERS HAVE
RECENTLY BEEN SHARPLY CRITICAL OF US POLICY. I TOLD HIM THAT,
WHILE THE E IS DISAPPOINTMENT IN MAY EGYPTIAN CIRCLES ABOUT OUR

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INABILITY TO
DATE TO ACHIEVE FURTHER WITHDRAWAL OR TO PROVIDE THE LONG PROMISED
$250 MILLION AID, I THOUGHT GOE STILL RECOGNIZES USG IS
ONLY POWER THAT CAN HELP TO MOVE THE SITUATION FORWARD. SENIOR
OFFICIALS, FROM THE PRESIDENT ON DOWN,CONTINUE TO
MAINTAIN CLOSE AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH US. USG IS
CONSCIOUS OF THE PRESIDENT'S SITUATION AND, WHILE IT IS
IMPOSSIBLE TO SET ANY TIMETABLE, WE HAVE INDICATED READINESS
TO CONTINUE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH.
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